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THE PROGRESS OF SCIENCE

THE CONVOCATION-WEEK MEETINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES

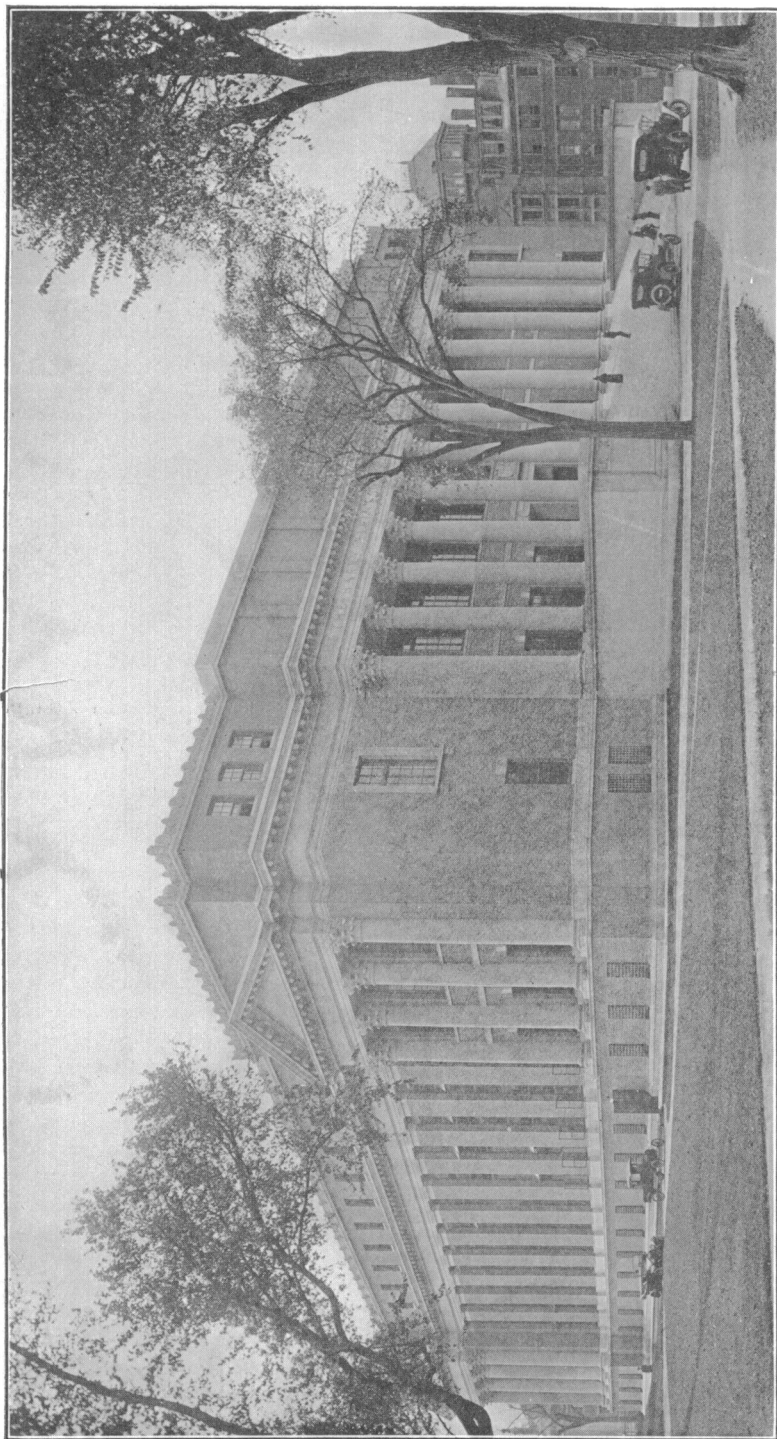
THE scientific men of the country will hold their annual meetings this year at widely separated places and with some conflict. The American Association for the Advancement of Science is responsible for the arrangement of the convocation-week meetings, having fourteen years ago transferred its own meeting from mid-summer to the Christmas holidays. At the same time it obtained from many universities and colleges an extension of the Christmas holidays or grants for leave of absence, so that the week in which New Year's day falls should be free for these meetings. The American Association arranges also for the meetings of affiliated scientific societies which may wish to meet in conjunction with it. It is not expected that all these societies will meet every year with the Association, for there are obvious advantages in the isolation of a single society or a small group concerned with related subjects, as well as in a large congress covering all the sciences and numbering its attendance by the thousands.

In order to meet the complicated conditions as well as may be, the American Association has planned a program, according to which once in four years there shall be a great convocation-week meeting representing all the natural and exact sciences, and perhaps, ultimately, also engineering, education, economics, history, philology, literature and art. Such a demonstration of the intellectual forces of the country should be a stimulus to those who join in it and an exhibition that would impress the whole country. It is proposed to hold these meetings once in four years and in succession

in New York, Chicago and Washington. The first will take place in New York at the end of the year 1916, and thereafter they will be held in the four-year periods at which the national presidential elections occur. In the intervening two-year periods the meetings will also be in large scientific centers, and it is expected that most of the national scientific societies will take part. The first of these meetings was held in Philadelphia, and the next will probably be held in Boston at the end of the year 1918. In the intervening years the American Association will meet at places more remote from the large centers of scientific population, or in cities or at universities where the accommodations are more limited. The first of these meetings was in Atlanta at the end of the year 1913, and the meeting this year is at the Ohio State University, Columbus. In 1917, it will probably be in Toronto, Nashville or Pittsburgh.

At these meetings the attendance of scientific men is in the neighborhood of a thousand; at the larger meetings it may be two or three thousand, and at the four-year periods, from five to ten thousand. The vast extent of the country makes it difficult for the scientific men of the west to visit the east, and conversely, during the Christmas holidays, and summer meetings may be held in the west once in four years, the first having been held this summer in connection with the Panama-Pacific exhibition, and on the occasion of the organization of a Pacific Division of the Association.

Although the meeting of the American Association opening at Columbus, on December 27, is not one of the larger convocation-week meetings it promises to be of more than usual interest to those who are able to be pres-



THE HARRY ELKINS WIDENER MEMORIAL BUILDING.

ent, as was the case with the meeting held at the Ohio State University some fifteen years ago. The address of the retiring president, Dr. Charles W. Eliot, who, called from a chair of chemistry to the presidency of Harvard University, has become by common consent our leader in education, is on "The Fruits, Prospects and Lessons of Recent Biological Science." An introductory address will be made by the incoming president, Dr. W. W. Campbell, the distinguished director of the Lick Observatory. Among the vice-presidential addresses before the eleven sections of the association may be noted important subjects, treated by Professor White, of Vassar College, in mathematics; Professor Zeleny, of Yale University, in physics; Professor Lillie, of the University of Chicago, in zoology; Professor Pearce, of the University of Pennsylvania, in pathology; Professor Hanus, of Harvard University, in education, and Dr. Bailey, formerly director of the Cornell Agricultural College, in agriculture.

Eighteen national societies, including the American Society of Naturalists, and the societies devoted to mathematics, physics, zoology, entomology and botany meet at Columbus in affiliation with the American Association. The chemists do not hold a winter meeting this year. The physiologists and pharmacologists meet in Boston; the anatomists in New Haven; the psychologists in Chicago; the philosophers in Philadelphia; the geologists, paleontologists, geographers, anthropologists, sociologists and economists in Washington.

The serious conflict of the year is with the Second Pan-American Scientific Congress meeting in Washington from December 27 to January 8. It was originally planned that this congress should meet in the autumn, but the date was changed and the preliminary arrangements were made without consultation with American scientific men. The officers of the congress, selected presumably by the department

of state, are Mr. Phillips, the third assistant secretary of state, chairman of the executive committee; Mr. Scott, secretary of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, vice-chairman; Mr. John Barrett, secretary-general; and Mr. Glen L. Swiggett, assistant secretary-general. The department of state is probably as ignorant of the scientific condition of the country as the navy department, whose secretary when asked why he had ignored the National Academy, by law the scientific adviser of the government, and the American Association, the great democratic body of scientific men, in selecting the societies to elect members of the Naval Advisory Board, appeared never to have heard of either association. A program in nine sections has been arranged for a "scientific" congress, which ignores mathematics, physics, pure chemistry, geology, zoology, botany and psychology.

However, attempts have been made to rectify the earlier errors. Dr. Welch, president of the National Academy of Sciences, has been made honorary vice-chairman, and Surgeon General Gorgas, Dr. Holmes and Dr. Woodward have been added to the executive committee. The conflict in time does not extend to the second week of the Pan-American Congress, and it is probable that after the adjournment of the Columbus meeting a special meeting of the American Association will be held at Washington. Under existing conditions, it is extremely desirable that friendly relations and cooperation in science should be maintained among the American Republics.

THE WIDENER MEMORIAL LIBRARY OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

THE corner-stone of the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library was laid on June 16, 1913, and two years later, on Commencement Day, June 24, 1915, the dedication of the then completed building took place. The architect was Mr. Horace Trumbauer, of Philadelphia.